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105th plenary meeting
Thursday, 31 July 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 16 at its 71st plenary meeting, on 20 December 2013. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution before it today, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of agenda item 16. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 16?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16 (*continued*)

Information and communications technologies for development

Draft resolution (A/68/L.54)

The Acting President: Members will furthermore recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2013, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 16 to the Second Committee. To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft resolution, may I also take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 16 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.54, entitled "Modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.54?

Draft resolution A/68/L.54 was adopted (resolution 68/302).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mukerji (India): My delegation had the honour to negotiate resolution 68/302 to its logical conclusion on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Although it was a lengthy period of protracted negotiations spanning nearly six months, the journey that we undertook from seemingly unbridgeable positions to the eventual solution that we have adopted in the form of the resolution today is indeed welcome news for all other multilateral negotiation processes at the United Nations.

Allow me first to place on record our sincerest appreciation to the facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Tunisia and Finland, for having

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taken an extremely constructive role in the process and for their leadership in having found the most amicable solution. I must also thank the delegations of the United States and the European Union and compliment them on their constructive and forward-looking approach during the negotiations, which helped us to arrive at a win-win solution for all. I would also like to thank all States members of the Group of 77 and China for their support and for having made substantive contributions in finding the middle ground on the subject.

Our task was to find the solution to five issues in the resolution, namely, the timing, structure, format, participation and outcome of the overall review. The resolution, which completed the silence procedure successfully, is ample testimony to the best way forward on all those five counts.

We have been able to secure the centrality and supremacy of the General Assembly in that process. The review has been mandated as an "intergovernmental negotiation process" that takes into account inputs from Member States, observer States, observers and all relevant stakeholders of the World Summit on the Information Society. It ensures that our leaders "at the highest possible level" will meet in a high-level meeting of the General Assembly in December of next year to adopt the outcome of our intergovernmental negotiations. Most importantly, it keeps the focus firmly on using information and communications technologies (ICTs) for development and bridging the development divide. It also promises to address the challenges that have emerged since 2005, while fully respecting the mandate of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

We therefore look forward to commencing the overall review in June next year within the Assembly and under its established rules of procedure, which have also been designated the guiding benchmark for this process in the text of the resolution. We would like to assure the President of our delegation's steadfast commitment to ensuring a forward-looking, action-oriented and substantive outcome document that does full justice to the enormous potential that ICTs have to offer for the benefit of all, especially developing countries.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): The United States was pleased to join the consensus on resolution 68/302 and looks forward to working with the General Assembly and the multi-stakeholder community during the high-level meeting to be held in December 2015. We very much appreciate the excellent leadership of the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Tunisia in marshalling the negotiations that led to the resolution, which we believe provides a mechanism for the Assembly to fulfil the mandate arising from the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted in 2005. We would also like to thank all our colleagues who cooperated in forging this consensus resolution.

My Government is pleased that the high-level meeting will include strong multi-stakeholder participation. In the years since the original World Summit on the Information Society, the international community has increasingly embraced the open, inclusive, multi-stakeholder processes that have facilitated the information society's extraordinary success. The United Nations membership has recognized that success and the importance of the multi-stakeholder model in crafting the participation for this event. Recent events such as NETmundial in Brazil have confirmed that global support for the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance and policymaking is growing.

The United States will continue to stand firmly with the multi-stakeholder community against any attempts to undermine the model that has made the ubiquity and dynamism of the information society possible. We are also pleased that the high-level meeting will take into account inputs from all relevant World Summit on the Information Society stakeholders. All stakeholders have contributed to the successful implementation of the Summit and deserve a voice in the 10-year review. Similarly, we are gratified that the modalities reaffirm the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as a focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the Summit. The Commission is the best venue for providing an objective, evidence-based and data-driven review of the Summit to the General Assembly.

The United States believes that this event will help us move past political posturing and ideology towards problem-solving, and will return us to the World Summit on the Information Society mandate of building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society that will enable individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life.

Mr. Mollinedo Claros (Plurinational State of Bolivia): The Group of 77 and China (G-77) welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 68/302 on modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at this meeting.

The resolution recalls the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society and endorsed by the General Assembly, as well as the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, in which the Assembly was requested to undertake the overall review in 2015 of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit. The Group of 77 and China would like to affirm its position that while we want the high-level meeting to be held in December 2015 at the summit level, the phrase used in the resolution — "at the highest possible level" — does not preclude the possibility of our leaders at the highest level attending the adoption of the outcome document. Given the importance that information and communications technologies hold for developing countries, we would like to assure the Assembly of participation by leaders from the G-77 at the highest levels in the meeting to be held in December next year.

In addition, we are heartened to note that the primary concern for developing countries — that is, bridging the digital divide — has been recognized as one of the key elements of the scope of today's resolution. We have also been able to ensure the primacy and centrality of the General Assembly as key elements in the conduct of the overall review, without any deviation from the Assembly's established rules of procedure. The Group of 77 and China is happy to reaffirm that the General Assembly is a multilateral rather than a multi-stakeholder body, and that any attempt to change its character and nature has been successfully resisted in the text of the resolution.

The Group of 77 and China believes that the Assembly's overall review will not only take stock of the progress that has been made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society since 2005, but will also address potential information and communications technology gaps and areas needing continued focus, as well as addressing challenges in harnessing information and communications technologies for development. Another important point that required consideration was that the overall review should not be predicated on the input of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development alone but should be based on all relevant inputs, including, first and foremost, submissions from Member and observer States.

The G-77 and China would like to thank its coordinator, the delegation of India, for its successful negotiation of the resolution on behalf of the Group, as well as to commend the constructive role of our partners in helping us to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting on adopting resolution 68/302 on modalities for the 10-year review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Tunisia, Ambassadors Jarmo Viinanen and Khaled Khiari, for assisting us with the mandate set forth in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. Our appreciation also goes to the delegation of India for representing the Group of 77 and China (G-77) well and to those in the Secretariat who carefully translated into a text the substantive agreements of Member States, protecting them from even the most innocent of editorial changes.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the G-77 and China, and would like to present the following comments in its national capacity.

Information and communications technology (ICT) can play a catalysing role in helping developing countries to achieve the overarching goals of poverty eradication, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, as set out in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex).

In fact, we made good progress on the Rio+20 mandate by creating a set of sustainable development goals that are universal in nature and take into account the common but differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries, in particular their respective capabilities. On Saturday, 19 July, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals adopted 17 goals, together with 169 targets, framed by a substantive narrative in the form of an introduction. Information and communications technology is explicitly mentioned in Goals 4, 5, 9 and 17. That

means that the Open Working Group decided that ICT was relevant to achieving the sustainable development goals in the fields of education, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, infrastructure and industrialization and that they were important enablers under the technology subheading of Goal 17 on the means of implementation.

That clearly sets a high standard for the 10-year review and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society. It also establishes a clear and natural link between the Summit and the post-2015 development agenda, to be concluded and adopted next year. The international community will need to redouble its efforts to bridge the digital divide, thereby reducing inequality within and among countries. That will require the channelling of appropriate and sustainable funds for ICT infrastructure, especially broadband networks and services, as well as capacity-building and technology transfer. The sustainable development goals also mention the establishment of a United Nations global technology facilitation mechanism, the promotion of the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building for the least developed countries by 2017.

Open, transparent and democratic Internet governance is an issue to which my country attaches the utmost importance. We need to ensure that the Internet remains a space safe for public use, where civil liberties and individual freedoms are fully recognized and protected, even against the backdrop of national security, police control or intelligence considerations.

In order to discuss that at the highest level, Brazil convened the Global Multi-stakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance (NETmundial) in São Paulo in April. Participants agreed that surveillance performed on a systematic, arbitrary or mass scale undermined user confidence, eroded trust in governance and was a violation of the human right to privacy, encroaching upon other freedoms, such as the freedom of expression and of opinion. It also undermines the role of the Internet as a platform for business and private-sector development, harming the trust placed in it by millions of consumers by giving away their personal information.

We need to prevent the false dilemma between free speech and privacy, on the one hand, and security in cyberspace, on the other. As long as there are no guarantees that the flow of information will remain private, speech cannot be deemed to be free. A recently published report based on almost 100 interviews demonstrates, for example, how mass surveillance and secrecy are undermining press freedom. Reporting on matters of major public concern is curtailed because the complexity of programmes and their undeclared reach and unclear legal foundations raise the stakes for those who might otherwise consider talking to journalists.

With regard to the fight against terrorism, the Security Council has repeatedly stated that measures must comply with all obligations under international law, in particular human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. Those sensitive dimensions of a new trend towards the unbridled securitization of cyberspace is all the more reason to further the discussion of a legal framework that safeguards rights, democratic governance and appropriate conduct on the Internet at the international level, be it in the Human Rights Council, the Internet Governance Forum or in the follow-up to the Summit.

NETmundial participants also expressed the view that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) needs to urgently transform into a truly international organization and break away from a governance structure that is still subjected to the ultimate unilateral control of a single Government. ICANN needs to be more global, more representative and more legitimate. My delegation is convinced that the United Nations is the most appropriate forum for discussing that pressing issue and for moving such a process forward.

Brazil's own experience highlights the importance of a multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, where the voice and views of no individual participant takes precedence over those of another, where the public, not-for-profit and private sectors interact without nullifying each other and where the presence of multi-stakeholders is not incompatible with multilateralism. Such a model definitely represents an improvement over the current unilateralist governance model, wherein civil liberties and the public interest are insufficiently safeguarded.

Finally, Brazil regrets that the Working Group of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development could not agree on the recommendations to fully implement the mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society on enhanced cooperation of the Tunis Agenda. Today's resolution establishes a new deadline of June 2015, which must be met.

I thank the President for calling upon Member States and the United Nations system to engage in the debate of such critical issues of our time.

Mr. Missaoui (Tunisia): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its heartfelt appreciation for the contribution of Member States and of the stakeholders of the World Summit on the Information Society to the negotiation process that resulted in the adoption of the text of resolution 68/302.

We believe that by adopting the comprehensive set of modalities laid out in the text, we committed to ensuring the successful organization and outcomes of the overall review next year. The adoption of the resolution by consensus today also demonstrates our common goal of ensuring the successful overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, taking into account the critical role of information and communications technology (ICT) in changing our society. In fact, ICT has helped us to be more productive and more efficient than ever before in fulfilling our desire for sustainable development and a better life. However, with those new opportunities come new threats, which need to be addressed.

Aware of the opportunities and challenges that ICT can provide to sustainable development and the quality of life, since 1998, Tunisia, for its part, proposed holding the World Summit on the Information Society and hosted its second phase in November 2005. The Summit adopted important outcomes, namely, the Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. Furthermore, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, we had the honour to co-facilitate, along with Finland, the consultations on the modalities for the next overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Finally, let me add that Tunisia stands ready to share its input and lessons learned with regard to ICT as we move forward in the process of the overall review next year.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Jarmo Viinanen, former Permanent Representative of Finland, and His Excellency Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Permanent Representative of Tunisia, who so ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations. I am sure that members of the Assembly will join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States. At the outset, we wish to thank the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Tunisia for their tireless efforts in facilitating a consensual outcome on the modalities for the overall review of the World Summit on the Information Society.

The European Union and its member States remain strongly committed to information and communication technology (ICT) for development. We attach great importance to the fundamental aim of the World Summit on the Information Society to use technology to improve peoples' lives and to bridge the digital divide. The Tunis Agenda recognized the growing role of ICTs not only as a medium of communication, but also as a development enabler and as a tool for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

As we look forward to the high-level meeting in December 2015, we would like to underline the importance that the European Union and its member States attach to the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, ensuring accountability, transparency and independence from special interests. Ensuring active and meaningful participation, inputs and engagement by all stakeholders — both in the preparatory process and at the high-level meeting itself — are key concerns for us. We hope that the forthcoming review will take full account of the 10-year review facilitated by the International Telecommunication Union in June 2014, as well as the event hosted by UNESCO in February 2013.

The World Summit on the Information Society affirmed the potential of information and communication technology to promote economic and social growth and development, and we look forward to engaging constructively with the Review.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 33 (*continued*)

Prevention of armed conflict

(b) Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution

Draft resolution (A/68/L.55)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on sub-item (b) of agenda item 33 and adopted resolution 68/262 at its 80th plenary meeting on 27 March 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.55.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): I have the honour to present draft resolution A/68/L.55, entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution", on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation. The Group of Friends of Mediation was established in 2010. It is co-chaired by Turkey and Finland and currently consists of 39 Member States and eight international and regional organizations, with a total of 47 members.

It is no coincidence that the draft resolution will be the third draft resolution initiated by the Friends of Mediation, to be adopted by the General Assembly. The Friends of Mediation are convinced that mediation is a key United Nations Charter instrument, relevant to all stages of the conflict cycle, from prevention to resolution to the implementation of agreed outcomes. The Friends of Mediation endeavour to promote the optimization of its use.

We believe that mediation draws its strength from being consent-based and helps to save precious lives and resources and to reduce human suffering, thereby creating conditions conducive to lasting peace and paving the way for sustainable development. Such qualities become even more relevant at this juncture where the international community is increasingly challenged with conflicts and disputes in many regions of the world.

In 2011, this body adopted, by consensus, its first-ever resolution on mediation, resolution 65/283, which was a comprehensive resolution on mediation. In 2012, a second resolution — resolution 66/291 — was adopted, requesting the General Assembly to reconsider the issue at its current, sixthy-eighth session. The first resolution addressed the normative framework of mediation, by taking up many related aspects, including principles, the provision of resources, the strengthening of capacities, enhancing the role of women and promoting cooperation with regional and subregional arrangements.

This time, the Group of Friends of Mediation decided to develop one of those aspects as the theme of the draft resolution, namely, regional and subregional organizations. Regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in mediation. To highlight their added value, I will quote from the draft resolution:

> "[R]egional and subregional organizations can benefit mediation efforts with their specific approaches stemming from their geographic, cultural and historical proximity to, as well as information about, specific local conflict situations within their mandates, and contribute to the prevention and resolution of such conflicts".

Indeed, there are many past and recent examples where regional and subregional organizations played a key role, either by leading or supporting mediation processes. However, for regional and subregional organizations to play this role, they must possess the necessary mandates and capacities. Without such capacities, their role can only be limited, especially taking into account the increasing professionalization of the field of mediation. The draft resolution seeks to encourage building such capacities.

In that context, we would like to underscore the efforts of many regional and subregional organizations to build their mediation, conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution capacities, including the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which are members of the Group of Friends of Mediation. We also commend the other organizations, including the African subregional organizations, for being in the process of building or having built similar capacities, which is duly reflected in the draft resolution.

As the first resolution on mediation highlighted, there is a need to enhance cooperation and coordination between regional and subregional organizations and

the United Nations. The Department of Political Affairs has reported that it has worked together with such organizations in over 70 per cent of its mediation engagements in 2013. We believe that the interaction deserves to be further promoted and strengthened in order to achieve more effective results in mediation efforts, thereby contributing to global peace and security. Therefore, through the draft resolution, the Group of Friends of Mediation has sought to promote the strengthening of such partnerships and cooperation between those organizations and the United Nations, including the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as with other relevant actors involved in mediation.

We wish to underscore that the draft resolution does not have a particular focus on a specific conflict or mediation process, but that its approach is purely thematic. Its intention, as in the previous resolutions on mediation, is to contribute to the normative framework. Overall, the draft resolution seeks to promote and optimize the use of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Other elements contained in the draft resolution will be summarized by the representative of Finland, who will also be speaking in his capacity as facilitator, after the adoption.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their active participation and for the constructive approach and flexibility shown during the negotiation process. We would also like to express our appreciation to the delegations that sponsored the draft resolution.

We also thank the Secretariat, in particular the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, which has provided us with the necessary information and insight during the preparation and negotiation of the draft resolution.

We now have a draft resolution that, for the first time, has a mediation-specific focus on regional and subregional organizations. We hope that the draft resolution will be utilized to optimize the use of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution, thereby contributing to sustainable peace, security and stability throughout the world.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.55, entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.55, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain, Belize, Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malta, Mongolia, Nigeria, Peru, the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.55?

Draft resolution A/68/L.55 was adopted (resolution 68/303).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Lord (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join the consensus on resolution 68/303, on mediation. We thank those who worked so hard to forge agreement on a final text, particularly the representatives of Turkey and Finland, who acted as the resolution's facilitators.

We want to take this opportunity to reiterate the strong commitment of the United States to mediation as a vital tool for preventing armed conflict and promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as to underscore the importance of capacity-building in mediation both within the United Nations and at the regional, subregional and national levels.

While welcoming the resolution, we wish to highlight our disappointment at the inclusion of language referencing self-determination and foreign occupation that rests well outside of the scope of the issue at hand.

In spite of those references, the resolution as adopted represents an important step on the road to strengthening one of the most critical functions of the United Nations, while also increasing awareness in the

international community of the importance of mediation at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. We must continue building upon the resolution's strong message. In that regard, the United States, through its representatives at the United Nations and as a member of the Group of Friends of Mediation, will continue to work during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and beyond to ensure that progress continues.

Mr. Heumann (Israel): The Charter of the United Nations recognizes the essential role of mediation in the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts, and it has the potential to create the conditions necessary to achieve a lasting peace.

It is therefore unfortunate, from our point of view, that sections of resolution 68/303 have been stained by political interests. In particular, Israel objects to the inclusion of inflammatory terminology that is irrelevant to the topic at hand and serves only to single out a single Member State.

Throughout the consultations process, Israel engaged constructively in the negotiations, but certain nations rejected compromise, proving they were more interested in scoring points at Israel's expense than in finding constructive solutions and achieving a text that could be adopted by consensus.

While Israel did not call for a vote on the resolution, it objects to the use of counterproductive terminology. We stress that the terminology should not be incorporated into future resolutions or perceived as agreed language in future negotiations.

Mr. Bonser (Canada): While Canada was an active participant in the negotiations, we feel it is unfortunate that some delegations have chosen to politicize the process by including foreign occupation language that is both inappropriate in resolution 68/303 and does not constructively promote the subject of mediation. However, given the importance of the issue, in a spirit of compromise, Canada joined the consensus on the resolution.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): Armenia recognizes the practical elements in the operative paragraphs of the resolution on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (resolution 68/303). At the same time, we recall that the draft of the resolution at its inception aimed at focusing on the role of regional and subregional organizations in mediation.

We regret to note that the text negotiated prior to adoption eventually fell short of explicitly recognizing certain ongoing mediation activities at the level of regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with agreed mandates. Clearly, credible and effective mediation aims at the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution in a way that is based on the United Nations Charter and international law. It cannot be otherwise. The Charter, in turn, underlines, in Article 1, the purpose of the Organization

> "[t]o develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace".

The purposes and principles of the Charter cannot be distorted, limited or conditioned. Each mediation process is specific in nature and deals with distinct situations. It is therefore inevitable that in every particular mediation process there emerges a specific set of proposals to incorporate the principles, elements and measures based on international law that best reflect a reasonable compromise to achieve a durable solution to a given conflict situation.

It is regrettable that the preambular part of today's resolution applies a selective approach to the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution, without regard to differentiation in mediation activities. Mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution is a highly sensitive process. The resolution, however, lacks the degree of sensitivity required in dealing with mediation. Armenia therefore dissociates itself from the consensus and regrets that the text of the resolution does not represent the agreement of all. At the same time, we remain committed to further constructive efforts to eventually achieve a genuine consensus on a future text. Mediation must be based on consent, and so should this resolution.

As mediation activities are of direct relevance to Armenia, I take this opportunity to reiterate our acknowledgment and appreciation of the full support of the international community at large, and of the Secretary-General in particular, for the mediation efforts of the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — France, the United States and the Russian

Federation. Armenia's commitment to that process remains unwavering.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the representative of Finland, who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. Keisalo (Finland): I would first like to thank all Member States, especially the Group of Friends, for the strong support and constructive spirit they showed during the consultations and negotiations. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretariat for its support, as well as to the regional organizations and other partners that have been working with this initiative along the way. I would like to briefly highlight a few points about today's resolution 68/303.

The role of regional organizations in conflict prevention and mediation has grown. The resolution just adopted underlines the important role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, and acknowledges their added value. One of its key elements is the strengthening of partnerships. That means, first, partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations; secondly, partnerships among the regional and subregional organizations; and, thirdly, partnerships between international organizations and other actors involved in mediation. This new resolution will enhance those partnerships and mechanisms for cooperation by encouraging the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations to hold dialogues and to exchange views, information and lessons learned. In the increasingly competitive field of mediation, practitioners often call for better coordination, cooperation and coherence. Teamwork is key to effective mediation.

The resolution recognizes the important role of civil society actors and the expertise and capacities of the national and civil society actors involved in mediation activities, and it underlines the importance of cooperation between regional organizations and civil society and of developing mechanisms to that end.

The role of women in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and conflict resolution is vital. The new resolution highlights the importance of women's full and effective participation and encourages the Secretary-General to continue to appoint women as lead mediators and members of mediation teams and to ensure gender expertise.

Political support and adequate resources are essential to the success of mediation and to the implementation of agreed-on outcomes of mediation processes. In that regard, the resolution invites Member States to consider providing sustained political and financial support and expertise. It also seeks to promote capacity-building in mediation and requests the Secretary-General to continue to work with Member States and regional and subregional organizations, including through training events and staff exchanges. Furthermore, regional organizations are invited to appoint mediation focal points.

Lastly, the resolution invites the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on mediation, as well as on possible ways to enhance such cooperation.

We are pleased that the new resolution further develops the normative basis and global support structures of mediation. It helps the United Nations, regional organizations and others in their mediation efforts on the ground. It will also once again raise the status of mediation in the United Nations system. The resolution's main sponsors, Finland and Turkey, firmly believe that with it the United Nations will continue to strengthen its role as the global standard-setter for mediation. And while the resolution alone will not prevent or solve any potential or ongoing conflicts, it will certainly add to our capacity to do so if we use it fully.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to begin by expressing my particular gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Turkey and their Missions for their commitment

to mediation and for their efforts in preparing and facilitating this important resolution (resolution 68/303).

The concept of mediation and its actual use in international politics have come a long way. The increasing commitment to using mediation and ever more significant efforts to promote it are developments that we welcome. The resolution adopted today is another milestone on that path.

We have been dedicated supporters of efforts to enhance the use of mediation to prevent conflicts and to end and resolve disputes. This lies at the heart of the work of the European External Action Service, and is also a key component of the European Union's comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution, encompassing early warning, early recovery, peacebuilding — including through our Common Security and Defence Policy missions — and long-term sustainable development.

In a presidential statement made in February (S/PRST/2014/4), the Security Council particularly emphasizes the strong cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in the area of mediation. It welcomes the EU's mediation efforts, including its significant contribution to the economic development and stabilization of the Western Balkans region. It also notes the European Union's efforts to find a comprehensive negotiated solution designed to ensure that Iran's nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful.

Regional and subregional organizations play a crucial role in the peaceful settlement of conflicts. With their particular regional experience and expertise, they have a profound understanding of the root causes of conflicts and are well suited to contributing to the peaceful resolution of such conflicts. Their involvement also facilitates a multi-stakeholder approach, without which mediation cannot be effective. Inclusivity and the combined strength of various actors in mediation increase the chances of reaching sustainable peace.

The equal and full participation of women in peace processes, as today's resolution rightly recognizes, remains essential in mediation activities. We are also pleased to see that the important role and added value of civil society is again clearly acknowledged.

The European Union remains committed to ensuring that the United Nations, as well as regional and subregional organizations, is well equipped and continues to make contributions to conflict prevention, mediation and sustainable peace. In doing so, we contribute with expertise, as well as political and financial support. The European Union stands ready to respond to the call made through this resolution to further strengthen its cooperation and partnership with the United Nations and other regional and subregional organizations in order to ensure the coherence and complementarity of the efforts of actors involved in a specific mediation context.

At the same time, we have also been actively engaged in developing our own mediation support capacities. The Mediation Support Team of the European External Action Service was established in 2011. It provides rapid operational support and contributes to knowledge management, training and coaching. It has established strong cooperation with the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations with the aim of improving cooperation, coordination, coherence and complementarity.

We are committed to further sharing information, compiling best practices and strengthening the dialogue with other organizations. We welcome and encourage initiatives meant to promote and support a stronger role of mediation at regional and international levels. In that respect, the Spanish/Moroccan Mediation in the Mediterranean Initiative serves as a prime example of the importance of regional initiatives.

It is our shared duty to turn this resolution and commitments set out therein into reality. We will continue to raise awareness of mediation, to build capacities and to use mediation to prevent conflicts more effectively and to help resolve ongoing or future crises in a peaceful manner. We encourage all the relevant actors to promote mediation, build partnerships and share experiences. The coordination of efforts and messages is key. We look forward to continuing these discussions at upcoming General Assembly sessions.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 33.

I should like to make the following announcement concerning the General Committee of the General Assembly for the sixty-ninth session.

Members will recall that on 18 June 2014, the following representatives were elected as Chairpersons

of the six Main Committees of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and, accordingly, members of the General Committee for that session: for the First Committee, His Excellency Mr. Courtenay Rattray (Jamaica); for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), His Excellency Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai (Nepal); for the Second Committee, His Excellency Mr. Sebastiano Cardi (Italy); for the Third Committee, Her Excellency Mrs. Sofia Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste); for the Fifth Committee, His Excellency Mr. František Ružička (Slovakia); and for the Sixth Committee, His Excellency Mr. Tuvako Nathaniel Manongi (the United Republic of Tanzania). On behalf of the General Assembly, I congratulate the Chairpersons of the six Main Committees for the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly on their election. Having elected the Chairpersons of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Presidents for the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the General Committee of the General Assembly for the sixty-ninth session has been fully constituted, in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.